

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PPT-01 SCA-01 CPR-01 SSO-00 NSCE-00
INRE-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
VO-03 /058 W

-----161355Z 110663 /40

O R 161243Z APR 77 ZFF-4
FM AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 2769
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

C O N F I D E N T I A L 2780

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: CVIS, CSCE, RO
SUBJECT: NEW YORK TIMES CORRESPONDENT REFUSAL ENTRY
REF: STATE 086250 (NOTAL)

1. POL COUNSELOR WAS FINALLY ABLE TO CONTACT MFA SPOKESMAN
(GEORGHE BALTAC - PRESS AND CULTURAL DIRECTORATE COUNSELOR)
AT 1000 HOURS APRIL 16 WHO WAS OBVIOUSLY PRIMED FOR CALL.
POL COUNSELOR REQUESTED GOR VERSION OF BROWNE INCIDENT.
SPOKESMAN REPLIED THAT INDEED GOR OFFICIALS AT OTOPENI AIRPORT
HAD BARRED BROWNE'S ENTRY APRIL 15 ON BASIS HIS PASSPORT WAS
"NOT IN ORDER." SPOKESMAN REFUSED TO ELABORATE, BUT SAID
BORWNE SHOULD PURSUE MATTER WITH CONSULAR SECTION OF ROMANIAN
EMBASSY BELGRADE. SPOKESMAN GAVE NO INDICATION THAT FAVORABLE
GOR ACTION WOULD RESULT, HOWEVER.

2. EMBASSY PRESS OFFICER WAS ABLE TO REACH BROWNE BY TELEPHONE
SUBSEQUENT TO TRANSMISSION OF BUCHAREST 2778. BROWNE CONFIRMED
DETAILS IN PARA 1 REFTEL INCLUDING UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT TO REACH
ROMANIAN AMBASSADOR IN BELGRADE AND EVENTUAL CONVERSATION WITH
A ROMANIAN EMBASSY CULTURAL ATTACHE WHO TOLD PRESS OFFICER HE
HAD BEEN CALLED EARLIER IN THE DAY BY THE ROMANIAN EMBASSY
CONSULAR SECTION BUT ONLY TO SAY THEY HAD NO INFORMATION. BROWNE
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ADDED THAT HE WAS LEAVING FOR THE STATES MORNING OF APRIL 19.

3. AMBASSADOR WAS ABLE TO REACH DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER GLIGA
(WHO SUPERVISES PRESS DIRECTORATE) ABOUT 1230 AND REPEATED WHAT
WE SO FAR KNEW OF INCIDENT, AND ASKED GLIGA WHETHER ALLEGATIONS
ABOUT BROWNE'S PASSPORT MEANT THAT THERE WAS A NEW ROMANIAN POLICY
TOWARD FOREIGN JOURNALISTS OR TOWARD AMERICAN JOURNALISTS OR

WHETHER BROWNE HIMSELF WAS SOMEHOW UNACCEPTABLE?

4. GLIGA REPLIED THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO CHANGE IN ROMANIAN PRACTICES SO FAR AS FOREIGN JOURNALISTS IN GENERAL OR AMERICANS IN PARTICULAR. THEY WERE WELCOME TO COME TO ROMANIA AS THEY HAD BEEN IN THE PAST. SO FAR AS POSSIBLE PASSPORT IRREGULARITIES WERE CONCERNED, HE WOULD TRY TO FIND OUT IF THERE HAD BEEN ANY "TECHNICAL" PROBLEMS.

5. HE WENT ON TO SAY HOWEVER THAT SO FAR AS MR. BROWNE WAS CONCERNED THERE WERE "CERTAIN RESERVATIONS CONCERNING THE WAY HE AS A JOURNALIST PRESENTS ROMANIAN REALITIES." HE ADDED THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO TALK TO AMBASSADOR IN PERSON MONDAY RATHER THAN ON THE PHONE AND IT WAS AGREED THEY WOULD MEET AT 11:30 THE 18TH.

6. GLIGA REPEATED THAT ROMANIA HAD NOTHING AGAINST AMERICAN JOURNALISTS AS SUCH BUT DID HAVE THE RESERVATION ABOUT MALCOLM BROWNE WHICH HE WOULD SET FORTH IN MORE DETAIL. THE AMBASSADOR ASKED THEREFORE IF THIS MEANT BROWNE WOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO ENTER ROMANIA PRIOR TO THE MONDAY DISCUSSIONS. GLIGA CONFIRMED THIS TO BE CORRECT.

7. AFTER TALKING TO GLIGA AMBASSADOR SPOKE TO BROWNE WHO HAD BEEN TALKING TO PRESS OFFICER. AMBASSADOR TOLD BROWNE THAT HE WOULD BE SEEING GLIGA MONDAY MORNING AND THAT GLIGA HAD SAID HE WANTED TO DISCUSS BROWNE. AMBASSADOR PROMISED TO LET BROWNE KNOW RESULTS OF GLIGA CONVERSATION PRIOR TO BROWNE'S DEPARTURE FOR THE STATES.

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8. COMMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

IT IS CLEAR TO US THAT GOR HAS ENOUGH PROBLEMS WITH BROWNE TO BAR HIM FOR NOW IF NOT INDEFINITELY. PRESS ATTACK ON HIM (TRANSLATION BEING SUBMITTED SEPTTEL) CITES NOT ONLY HIS ROMANIA REPORTING, BUT GOES BACK TO HIS REPORTING OF RELEASE OF LAST GROUP OF AMERICAN FLIERS IN HANOI IN 1973.

9. WE BELIEVE GOR HAS FOCUSED SPECIFICALLY ON PULETZER PRIZE WINNER BROWNE FOR FOLLOWING REASONS. IN HIS MANNER, BROWNE ON OCCASION GIVES IMPRESSION OF HAVING ARRIVED IN ROMANIA WITH PRE-CONCEIVED IDEAS WHICH, ALTHOUGH HE DUTIFULLY LISTENS TO OTHER POINTS OF VIEW, TEND TO DOMINATE FINAL STORIES. ADDITIONALLY, HE TENDS TO CHOOSE SUBJECTS WHICH IN GOR EYES ARE THE MOST SENSITIVE-DISSIDENTS, CEAUSESCU'S LEADERSHIP, ROMANIAN "CAPITULATION" TO SOVIETS, MINORITY RIGHTS, AND EMMIGRATION - WHILE IGNORING OR DOWNPLAYING ASPECTS OF THESE TOPICS OR OTHER TOPICS WHICH GOR WOULD LIKE TO SEE STRESSED. THIRDLY, ON PREVIOUS VISITS HERE THIS YEAR, HE HAS OBVIOUSLY

AND NOTABLY SOUGHT OUT DISSIDENTS, LETTING IT BE KNOWN AT LEAST IMPLICITLY THAT THEY WOULD RECEIVE A SYMPATHETIC HEARING FROM HIM, WHILE GIVING THE IMPRESSION OF NOT PURSUING GOR SOURCES WITH EQUAL VIGOR FOR THEIR VIEWPOINTS. FINALLY, BROWNE'S STRONGLY ANTI-COMMUNIST VIETNAMESE WIFE WITH WHOM HE OFTEN TRAVELS MAY BE A FACTOR IN THAT SHE MAY SYMBOLIZE IN GOR EYES THE TYPE OF "REACTIONARY FORCES" DEFEATED BY ROMANIA'S GOOD FRIENDS IN HANOI.

10. IN AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH GLIGA WE NEED GUIDANCE ON FOLLOWING MORE GENERAL POINTS:

A) WHAT IS US POSITION REGARDING CONTENT OF JOURNALISTS REPORTS? WE PREFER OBVIOUSLY NOT GETTING INTO A DISCUSSION OF REPORTERS' INDIVIDUAL JUDGEMENTS OR CHOICE OF TOPICS. AT SAME TIME, IS CONTENT OF NO CONCERN TO US?

B) WITH REGARD TO NON-RESIDENT JOURNALISTS, AS WE READ PART 2(C) OF HELSINKI FINAL ACT THE LAST PARAGRAPH SEEMS THE MOST PERTINENT, EVEN THOUGH THIS IS NOT A QUESTION OF EXPULSION, CONFIDENTIAL

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SINCE BROWNE CAN BE CONSIDERED TO HAVE ATTEMPTED TO ENTER ROMANIA IN LEGITIMATE PURSUIT OF HIS PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY.

11. WITH MORE SPECIFIC REGARD TO ROMANIAN CONTEXT, AMBASSADOR WOULD PLAN TO MAKE FOLLOWING POINTS ADOPTED SOMEWHAT TO GLIGA'S PRESENTATION AND RESPONSES:

A) US VIEWS THIS FIRST REFUSAL OF ENTRY TO AN AMERICAN JOURNALIST (IN EMBASSY MEMORY WE HAVE NO RECORD OF LAST SUCH REFUSAL) AS A SERIOUS STEP BACKWARD IN THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES, WHERE BOTH ARE COMMITTED TO EXCHANGE UNDER THE TERMS OF THE HELSINKI AGREEMENT AND IN THEIR BILATERAL UNDERSTANDINGS.

B) WITH THE APPROACH OF THE BELGRADE CONFERENCE, IT IS INCUMBENT ON ALL SIGNATURES TO REMOVE RATHER THAN ADD OBSTACLES TO THE DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION.

C) IN KEEPING WITH GOOD AMERICAN-ROMANIAN RELATIONS, WE WOULD HAVE EXPECTED EITHER BROWNE TO HAVE BEEN INFORMED AHEAD OF TIME THAT HE WOULD NOT BE ALLOWED INTO ROMANIA OR THE EMBASSY TO HAVE BEEN SO INFORMED INSTEAD OF RESORT BEING MADE TO THE PASSPORT STORY.

D) THE PASSPORT STORY WHEN ADDED TO THE MUCH MORE SERIOUS DENIAL OF ENTRY WILL OBVIOUSLY HAVE A NEGATIVE INFLUENCE ON ROMANIA'S IMAGE IN THE UNITED STATES.

E) IN KEEPING WITH SPIRIT OF HELSINKI AGREEMENT AND GOOD BILATERAL RELATIONS, URGE GOR TO RECONSIDER ALLOWING BROWNE TO ENTER ROMANIA. WE ASSUME, GIVEN BROWNE'S STATEMENT TO US THAT HE CANNOT POSTPONE HIS LEAVE IN THE STATES, THAT HE WOULD NOT TRY TO RETURN TO ROMANIA UNTIL AFTER LEAVE OR AT LEAST UNTIL AFTER CONSULTATIONS IN NEW YORK.

F) BASIC POINT THROUGHOUT AMBASSADOR'S PRESENTATION WOULD BE STRESS ON PRINCIPLE OF FREE JOURNALISTIC

ACCESS AND TRAVEL AS BEING POINT AT ISSUE NOT WHETHER ONE
AGREES OR NOT WITH WHAT THEY WRITE.
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